

International Summit on the Teaching Profession

2025 Iceland

Progress Report: Ireland

12 March 2025

Since ISTP 2024, we in Ireland have continued to work towards progressing commitments made there.

Budget 2025 provided for additional investment in the education system including:

- Augmenting schools' middle leadership teams.
- Providing additional teachers to support children with SEN.
- Funding to support the implementation of the redeveloped curricula.
- Additional funding for social inclusion programmes.

The new Programme for Government makes many commitments to the further development of the education system. (See the bullet points in italics below).

Commitment 1: Facilitating the development of future-ready competencies in students.

Oide, Ireland's support service for teachers and school leaders provides teacher professional learning across a range of areas including curriculum implementation, digital technologies, induction, school leadership, and child protection.

- *Increase the number of special schools and special classes, hire additional Special Education Teachers and Special Needs Assistants and expand Early Intervention Classes.*
- *Expand the Summer Programme for students with special educational needs.*
- *Establish a new DEIS+ Scheme to support schools with the highest level of educational disadvantage.*
- *Expand the Home School Community Liaison Scheme.*
- *Review and enhance educational supports for Traveller and Roma students.*

Commitment 2: Role of technology in transforming education and vocational training

The vision of the Department's Digital Strategy for Schools to 2027 is to empower schools to harness the opportunities of digital transformation and build digital competence in both teachers and learners.

In addition, the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education is a live issue being explored by the Department of Education and teacher unions. In particular, the role of AI in assessment is under consideration, specifically in the context of Senior Cycle Redevelopment.

- *Ensure that the skills necessary for AI deployment, innovation and support are provided through our education and professional learning networks.*
- *Advance education, training and maintenance of new digital skills and capacities, and particularly STEM subjects, with a special focus on girls, through training and life-long learning, and to prioritise diversity and inclusion in STEM.*

- *Invest in ICT and the development of appropriate digital skills in our schools, embedding coding and ensuring digital safety.*
- *Work to provide all schools with high-speed internet broadband, to prepare students for a digital future with seamless access to technology resources and adaptive learning methods.*

Commitment 3: Partnerships to Support Learning for Life

The Department’s Statement of Strategy 2023-2025 commits to working with the education partners to “provide strategic leadership and support for the delivery of the right systems and infrastructure for the sector”.

The Department is committed, through the action plan to “strengthen relationships with key partners such as children and young people, parents, teachers, representative and management bodies and advocacy groups, and facilitate their input into policy and service developments.”

- *Establish a fund for schools to support new initiatives and encourage collaboration between clusters of schools, fostering creativity and shared learning*
- *Expand the provision of after-school and childcare in school buildings and campuses, in tandem with the school building programme, to provide better access for parents and communities*
- *Develop a workforce plan for the education sector to ensure that we continue to attract, retain and return people into the sector.*

In Singapore our delegation highlighted the high regard for the Irish education system internationally and the teacher unions underscored the need for increased investment to align with OECD counterparts. We regret that due to other government commitments our newly appointed Ministers cannot attend in Iceland this year. The teacher unions will continue to advocate for additional investment in equitable and inclusive education, to support educators to foster equity and well-being and to further assist educators to carry out their roles in a student-centred system.